Literature

LINDA'S YOUNG LADY

"Marm Linda" was the central figure in my grandmother's kitchen; the jet ornament, so to speak, on the bosom of my maternal family! Her untiring activity, fidelity, and boundless capability were the chief cornerstones of its domestic repose; her native wit and quaint drollery the crowning glory of its pinnacle of prede. These peculiarities of hers had, in the course of years, made her so widely and favourably known through all the branches and twigs of the family tree, that to quote from Marm Linda was like quoting from Shakspeare, only that it often happened that her remarks were wonderfully like the celebrated "play of Hamlet with the Prince of Denmark left out," for from the very abundance and volubility of her words, and the tropical luxuriance of her fancy, there was apt to spring up a charming obscurity of expression, which gave a certain raciness to her remarks wholly original; her tropes and her metaphors, her similes and her aphorisms, were so abundant that they often fairly tripped up each other's heels in the utterance; and while the gist of her remarks was usually discernible amidst the fog and the mêlée, the language which was intended to be the vehicle of their conveyance was very apt to be upset, if not foundered and wrecked on its way; and any endeavour to set her right in such cases usually brought out a flood of merry, musical laughter, and the words, "Laws! well; did I now? Well, what odds? I s'pose if I didn't speak I shouldn't say nothing; so dare it is, yer see."

I can not venture in this brief sketch of my old heroine to say, as some have done, in dealing with similar dark subjects, "Linda was of the pure Congo breed;" or, "She was an unmixed African," for she was probably nothing of the sort.

I am not going to puzzle or weary my readers with any profound genealogical investigations into the history, name, and nation of her various progenitors:

"Who was her father? Who was her mother? Had she a sister? Had she a brother?"

and all that sort of thing; probably neither we nor she could have done so if we had tried, and fortunately neither she nor we ever felt called upon to make the attempt. She was in the world, she had come into it by some means or other, she did not know how; she was in it for some purpose or other, she did not know what; and she had got to leave it at some time or other, she did not know when; and that was all she seemed to know, or care to know, upon the subject; and, after all, is not that in reality pretty much the amount of what we any of us do know about it?

To be sure we have "had fathers in the flesh," and so doubtless had she, although she could not name them; and if she could not finish the quotation, "which corrected us," she could tell of many who had done her that service without the parental claim to justify them in doing so; so we will let her antecedents go, only premising that, as in the popular strong drinks of her native Southern States, the far famed "sherry-cobblers," and "mint-juleps," sweet and sour, ice and spirit, fruit and herb, are mined in strange and seemingly incongruous juxtaposition, and yet by the mere turning of a straw they are "in linked sweetness long drawn out." Even so it seemed in Linda's moral, mental, and physical composition, the Saxon, Congo, French, Indian, and Spanish elements, in their unknown relationships and in an unremembered past, had been mingled together, and from this strange medley of nations and sects had come forth something very good, and that something blest our home, and was "Marm Linda." In person, Marm Linda, was tall and stately; not portly, as is too often the unclassical fault in females of her hue, but trim and well built; always scrupulously neat in her dress, though with a very decided leaning to colour and ornament; with a face of deep thoughtfulness when at rest, but suddenly breaking up and dimpling into all sorts of queer quips, and quirks, and droll grimaces when she spoke; embellishing her oratory by the free and graceful as well as emphatic gesticulations of head and feet, hands, arms, and shoulders.

This droll and piquant face was always enhanced by the showy folds of the Southern turban, which she had never laid aside, and which she seemed to regard as a mark of caste; for although very glad to have found a home in the North, and very proud of the free breath she drew there, she still, in her heart, entertained a certain respectful memory of the aristocracy of her native place, and took ever a grim pleasure in recalling the ancient glories of the "Old Dominion," evidently feeling that some of the reflected splendor and respectability of those old times still surrounded her, because she had been their bondwoman, "born on their estate;" and she often ended her remarks with "Laws! bress yer, chile! yer don' no nothing 'bout it; how should yer? I s'pect we had more niggers on our plantation den any one round! Laws! why, dey war jes like grasshoppers under yer feet, so thick, and 'bout as much use!"

It was one of the chief pleasures of my early life to draw out from Marm Linda some of the gorgeous reminiscences of those far-gone days, when, herself a mere thing, a chattel, she saw and heard what others were enjoying around her; but this was a difficult thing to do—a direct enquiry would have been met by Marm Linda with a respectful but obdurate silence: the subject had to be approached with extreme caution; but when once she began, particularly if you could so manage your tactics as to make her appear to volunteer the communication, she was free and voluble, warming up with her subject, and pouring out strange facts, and queer comments upon them, with a spiciness wholly her own.

"I thought I'd come out and sit with you a little while, Marm Linda," I said, one warm summer's afternoon. "Grandmamma is fast asleep on the sofa, I believe, and it is so much cooler and lighter here than it is in the parlour."

"Well, yes; I s'pects so," said Marm Linda, evidently glad to see me, although she did not wish to flatter me by letting me see it.—"Well, yes; I s'pect it is—don't hev to shet de bressed sun an' wind out ob my kitchen to keep my fine carpet and furniter from fading—that's so. Set down, honey, if yer like to—do. Law sakes, chile! no, not dare; don't go a nudging yerself, up inter de winder, jes like de cat, an' mussing up all yer putty ruffles. Look a dare now; see what a muss yer making ob 'um! I guess if yer had to iron out yer own dresses yersel', yer'd mind how yer used 'um dat a way. I reckon yer'd be a deal more keerfuler ob dem. See now! hew yer all up in a crimp behind. How long dat gownd going to las', I wonder, if yer use it so?"

"I don't know," I answered, carelessly.

"However, that is no look-out of yours, Marm Linda—you won't have to do it up, any way."

"No," said my old companion, laughing good-humouredly, "I sha'nt. True for yer, yer better believe it—dat's de bressed truff, if yer don't nebber live to tell another; but why can't yer hev took a cheer, honey, and sot down in it, like any oder Christianer doz, an' not be allers boosting up on to de winder-lege, or histing up onto de table, just like a heathen codderped—hey?"

This last figure of speech was a very favourite one with Marm Linda. What her exact idea of a quadruped was we could never conjecture; but, as it was generally preceded by the term "heathen," we always supposed it meant something very bad in her mind.

"I 'clare I nebber see young gals kick about as dey doz nowaday," gravely went on this sable teacher of deportment—"taint manners to do so, an' manners is a berry fine ting, particularly wher dey doz not cost nothing."

"Wher they do not cost anything, did you say?" said I, laughing, and removing myself, by another Eblaler twirl, from the window-sill to the end of the dresser as I spoke. "Are manners any better, then, Marm Linda, when they are to be got cheap?"

"Dare you go agin," said my old friend, holding up her hands in holy horror at my abrupt evolution. "Dare yer go—my gracious, chile! I'd tink yer war a born pancake—I 'clare I would.

"Or a turn-over; now will that do, mamma?" I said.

"No," said Marm Linda, sternly; "yer a deal more like to be a turn-out, I reckon, if yer don't 'have yerself. I isn't going to hev such conflopticoss in dis yere kitchen, I tell yer. Ef yer can't set down widout rooting roun' an' wriggling round so, yer'd better go out and wriggle in de pig-sty—dey's used to such manners—I isn't. Manners indeed!—cheap manners, did yer say? Wa'al, I wish dey was; I'd like to hev yer get dem cheap, for yer want a mighty deal ob dem; but I'll tell yer what, dey'd kim cheap to yer ef yer gib all yer worth for 'em!"

"Oh, Marm Linda! am I so bad as that?"

"Yes, chile; ebbery bit as bad. I nebber see a yong gal flop roun' so; stramming tro the kitchen jes like a pair ob tongs; and raging roun' an' roan' for ebber and ebber, like a mad dog-star, wid his tail in's mouth! My yong lady nebber done sich tings—oh, laws! massy on me, I'd like to see her!"

"Oh! well; I suppose she was older than I am. She was a *young lady*, you know!"

"Wa'al, yes; so she was, sometimes," said Linda, thoughtfully. "But she warn't allers older, not when she warn't no bigger than yer be; but she war a yong lady jes de same when she war a lille gal. Yer would'nt catch *her* a cutting out into de kitchin to talk wid de darkies, I'll bet 1'

"No, I suppose not; but what did she do?"

"Wa'al, she staid where she 'longed, I s'pose; up in her chamber, or in de drawing-room, or on de verander."

"Yes, I know—that was all right, I suppose; but what did she do?"

"Do? She didn't do notting on common, as I knows ob. She laid on the sopas, an' read books, and talked conversation; an' eat cake an' ice-creams; and dressed for dinner, and played on her music, an' rode out—laws, dare's plenty an' enuff for a yong lady to do, wit'out cutting up shines like you do!"

"Oh yes; I dare say; but then, you see, Linda, she was only one, and so she had to behave, and be prim and proper; but I have got two older sisters, you know, to sit in the parlour and behave, and so it's no matter."

"Well! an' hadn't my yong lady got sisters too? Warn't dare Miss Belle, an' Miss Loiza, an' Miss Harr'ot?"

"Why! was there? I am sure I did not know that; you always said your young lady, and so I supposed there was but one."

"Laws sakes alive, chile! yes, dare war; dare war four on 'um; but, in course, on'y one ob 'um war my yong lady. I 'longed to Miss Ad'line."

"'Longed to her?" I said, interrogatively.

"Yes, chile! don' yer know? I war her gal, her nigger—oh! laws; yer don' no, I s'pose. Yer Yankees is awful smart, and knows a deal—a sight more den dey used to down Souf; an' yer tink yer know more nor yer do, a heap; but yer don't know ebbery ting in de world yet, honey; an' yer hes to be tole some tings, any way. Now, yer nebber libed down Souf, an' I s'pose yer don' no dat in de fust families, sich as I war raised in"—here Marm Linda bridled up complacently, and settled her turban more firmly upon her head—"dat when a lille white chile is borned, de nextest lille nigger borned on de estate is 'sidered to 'long to dem."

"But how do they belong to them?" I asked.

"Why, gracious, chile! don' yer see? dey gibs dem to 'um for dare own."

"But what for, Linda?"

"Why, to play wid 'um when dey is lille childun, and wait on dem when dey grows bigger; an' to be dare niggers allers—to work 'um, or sell 'um, or keep dem, jes as dey done chooses."

"But who gives them, Marm Linda?"

"Why, de masser, honey! de fader ob de lille white chile, an' de masser ob de lille darkie—he gibs de one to de oder."

"But he has no right to do it," I said, warmly; "the darkies belong to God, and not to the masters; they don't own them!"

"Don't dey, now?" said Linda, with a low chuckling laugh, half mirth, half bitterness. "I guess dey tinks dey do; at least dey used to tink so, and I s'pect yer tink so too, of yer been borned down Souf, and borned a darky. 'Long to God,' did yer say? Yes, I s'pose dey doz now, tanks to Masser Linkum, all de niggers doz now, dey say; mebbe dey did den; but ef dey did, down where I war raised, 'pears like He didn't make no great 'count of sich property den; for dey war knocked about, and thrashed 'round awful in dem times. But I s'pect He has 'membered 'um since dat; for He 'pears to hev brought dem up out ob de Red sea ob troubles wid a bery 'ticular 'liverance, an' sot dem up high an' dry, hallelujar! an' I'm mighty glad He's been and done it—that's so!"

"But when you belonged to Miss Adeline, what did you do for her?"

"Why, I done a sight ob tings; I played wid her when she war a lille baby, an' I toted her round when she war tired; an' when we growed bigger, I stole cakes for her from ole Aunt Basha de cook, an' fruit from de garding; I telled lies for her when she telled me to, an' when she telled lies I used to swear to 'um; an' when she broke a plate or a finger-bowl, I sed I done it, 'an tuc de blame; ef she tore her gownd, I had my ears boxed; an' ef she fell down or hurt herse'f, I got a floggin'. Well! I tink I done my duty to her in dem times, any way."

"But, Marm Linda, I think it was too bad to treat the poor little darkies so; I think it was cruel and wicked!"

"Laws! no, it isn't, chile! it's what dey was made for, an' it's jes good enuff for dem; dey's allers under foot, dem little niggers is; an' dey an't ob de leastest use in de world; little lazy cusses! an' jes as imperant as dey can stare, too. Dey's allers kicked round; dey's used to it; it's good for 'um."

"But I thing Miss Adeline was a cruel and wicked girl to use you so.

"Bress yer soul, chile! no she warn't; dat's de way to bring up lillie niggers. Why, she war real good to me, Miss Ad'line war. I guess if yer'd seen Miss Loiza, dough, yer would open yer eyes. Goodness alive! didn't Desdemony hev to take it? Desdemony, she war Miss Loiza's gal, an' Mis Loiza, she war a spanker, yer safe to believe dat. Oh my! when she war mad, she war mad—jes like a sky-rocket, blazin' and sizzin'; a little mite of a ting, too; not much bigger den dat nutmeg-grater, an' as rough; arms an' feet all going to onst, jes like a mad hornet. I 'clare when I see dat great wind-mill down town thrashing roun', it allers makes me tink ob her; an' as to screamin'—why, she'd beat dat tarnation ole steam-indian dat lets off when it goes by de bottom ob de garding. Why, chile alive, I seen her screech, an' cotch her breff, and screech again and cotch her breff, till she war purple in de face; an' dey did not darst to touch her, or lay a finger on her, not one in de house, on'y masser, her fader; an' dey'd run an' call 'im, an' he'd take her by de two shoulders an' shake her till she'd hab to let go her breff—coz if he didn't she might go into fits, the doctor sed. But Miss Ad'line, she wa'n't noffing ob dat sort, an' she war bery good to me, an' bery ginerous, an' used to gib me heap of clothes an' tings. Yes, an she war a mighty putty yong lady, putty to look at, an' putty to behave herself—ah, well, well! poor dear Miss Ad'line!"

"And what became of her?" I said, quietly, and with an assumed air of indifference, for I saw Marm Linda was ripe for a story, if my impatience and overeagerness did not deprive me of the coming treat.

"But I suppose she is married and dead; long ago," I said.

"No she warn't, nuther," said my dusky friend; "so yer see dare's another time when yer tort yer knowed, an' yer didn't; least ways not married. She's dead and gone dis many a year, my poor yong lady, dat's true enough," she said looking up into the clear heavens as she spoke, and an unwonted shade of reverent and tenderness gathering over her queer old face, seamed and drawn by years and labour. "No, she nebber was married—she had heaps an' heaps ob lovyers too, but she nebber was married; an' I war de reason ob dat."

"You were? Oh, Marm Linda! what did you do to her?" I cried out hastily; for, as she had said the young lady was good, and beautiful, and rich, and had many admirers, I with my natural headlong impetuosity had jumped to the conclusion that Marm Linda in "toting her round," as she expressed it, must have let her fall, or meet with some terrible accident which had crippled her or disfigured her for life; but I was wrong in my hasty guess, and this was another instance, as she might have said, when I "tort I knowed, and I didn't."

"What did I do to her?" said Marm Linda, slowly and reflectively; "dis is what I done to her—yer jes cotch hold and help me wid dis yarn, an' I'll tell yer; yer see, Miss Ad'line war a mighty putty yong lady, as I telled yer, an' her pa war de richest man dare war any ware rou' dare, an' dey 'longed to one ob de fust families in Varginia," she added, with a proud satisfaction; "he war jes as rich as he could be, honey; an', in course, his young ladies hab mighty good times, and hab heaps ob yong gen'lemen arter dem; an' my Miss Ad'line she war de puttiest, an' de smartest, an' de pleasantest ob dem all; an', ob course, she hab de most lovyers. Oh! but didn't we hab gay times down dare? Well, Miss Ad'line she'd ride wid de yong gen'lemen, an' dance wid 'um, an' laff an' talk wid 'um, an' listen perlitie enuff to all dare fine speeching an' love-making—but, laws sakes! she didn't care a pea-nut for de whole tote ob dem—she knew she didn't.

"An' so it went along, and went along, easy like; an' at las' when dey hab him home one night from a big ball, an' ondressing my yong lady, I heered de oders chaffing her 'bout 'Kurnul Rollestone—Kurnul Rollestone!' Well, dat war de firstest time I ebber heer dat name, an' I didn't take no great notice on't den; but laws! I heered it 'nuff times an' too offen, arter dat, ebber to forget it, and I s'pects I nebber will. Well, it went along, an' went along, an' den Kurnul Rollestone he begun to call at our house to see de yong ladies; an' I minded dat Miss Ad'line she used to dress up putty 'mart 'bout dem times—laws! I couldn't fix her hair nice enuff to suit her when he war coming; an' I guessed putty well how matters war going, for Miss Ad'line she went out in de coach wid 'im, an' he driv her out in de pony carriage; an' she rid on horse back wid him—and; law! it war all de time, 'Kurnul Rollestone dis, an' Kurnul Rollestone dat'; an' he war a mighty awful handsome man, I 'lows dat! Desdemony said he looked jes like a heavenly angel in his uniform, an' so he did 'xactly I

"Well arter a while, he began to send Miss Ad'line bunches ob flowers, an' little mites ob letters—notes she called dem; an' she'd be so pleased to get dem, I used to lobe to carry dem to her jes to see her smile and blush; dey didn't look nothin on common on de outside, but I s'picioned dey war awful putty inside for Miss Ad'line would laff, an' blush, an' tickle over one ob dem for de longest time!"

"Well, chile, when de Kurnul he sent dem notes an' flowers, he allers sent dem by his own man Phil (Philander his name war, but dey allers called him Phil); an', in course, he allers asked for me, as it war natural he would, being as I war Miss Ad'line's gal, yer know; an' I used to go down to him, ob course; an' sometimes when his master kim ober in de saddle, Phil he kim too, an' so while dey war in de parlour, or on de verander, Phil an' me we war laffing and talkin' out by the backdoor.

"Well, Phil he war an oncommon peart-lookin' darkie; he warn't a noffin at all like de boys on our plantation, dough dey war a berry 'spectable set, yer may believe, coz doy hed 'longed to our masser's gran'fader, an' to his folks's folks for ebber nebber, since de world war made, I s'pect; an' our folks's folks hed allers been de very firstest family in Varginia; but dey warn't no touch to him for good looks, an' so genteel—yer'd see at once he warn't one ob yer low, no-account, ebberyday niggers, but suthing rudder oncommon.

"He war tall, an' slim, an' wide-awake looking; an' he'd a real come-up way wid him; he war jes as spruce as a pay-cock, an' while he hab got on some ob his masser's old clo'es (an' he mostly generally hed), an' all his gould rings, an' pins, an' studs, an' chains, an' his top-knot all brushed up, an' he smelling ob musk, an clobes, an peppermint, yer'd say he war a big-bug! Why, he'd come up de grabel-walk, in de backdoor yard, so smiling; an' be a-bowing an' a-turning out he toes, jes like a lobely butterfly!

"Well, yer see, I war a kinder peart, enuff looking gal den (laws, 'ebbery pes tinks hissel' de best ob de peck, 'yer know), but Miss A'line she guv me nice cloths, an' she lobed to see me look smart, an' I—well, I tort a good deal ob mysel' in dem days; an' so, yer see, Phil he got putty sweet wid me; an so—well, it jes went along, an' went along, an' Miss Ad'line she didn't seem to hab no objections, an' so whenever dey war sparkin' in de parlour, Phil an' me war sparkin' in de yard."

"How old were you then, Marm Linda?" I inquired.

But the question was as unwise as it was useless, for I well knew that this was a subject which our old favourite scrupulously ignored.

"Jes about de same as Miss Ad'line; I tole yer so, didn't I?" she said, sharply.

"Yes—but how old was she?"

I had better not have asked. "How ole war she when she war courted; is dat what yer wants to know? Well, I'll tell yer, she war jes de right age, or it wouldn't hab happen; an' I'll tell yer suffing more," she said, looking me full in the face, with a sort of stony satire on her old dark features; "if yer ebber gets a chance to be courted yersel' (which it's not at all likely yer ebber will be), I reckon yer'll tink it's jes about de right time!"

I saw my error, and hastened to repair it. "Yes, indeed," I said; "I dare say I shall. And so Phil was a good-looking young fellow—was he now, really?—and he made love to you. How nice that was just like Miss Adeline and Colonel Rollestone. Why, that was just right, was not it?"

"Yes," she said, mollified by my apparent heartiness; "it did seem as dough it war oncommon fort'nit; but, laws! it didn't end so. One ebenin de Kurnul and Miss Ad'line dey war gone out; an' dey war to stay rudder late, coz dey war to be supper an' dancing; an' Phil he kim up to spend de long ebening wid me.

"Well. I see putty soon he'd been drinking; I'd s'picioned him afore, but dat time I war done sure ob it; he'd been an' drinked more nor he could bear; an' now he war kinder silly like, an' at last he got to talkin' rudder too free; an' at last I got a sorter spunky, and tole him to keep his distance.

"'Oh, my!' he says, laffin', 'don't pray yer be so high an' mighty, Miss Belinda,' he sez, sez he; 'for in course I means to marry yer, when de Kurnel he marries Miss Ad'line."

"'Oh, indeed! does yer, now?' I sez. 'I'm berry much oblige for yer good 'pinion; but I s'pect yer aren't sure ob it yet—be yer, now?'

"'Oh yes, I be,' he sez. 'I'a sure an' sartin; dat's 'greed on!'

"'What's 'greed on?' sez I.

"'Why, dat I'm to marry you, Miss Belinda. Yer see, yer Miss Ad'line's gal; an' when she marries my masser, why in course yer 'long to him; an' he's 'greed to gib me my freedom an' a tousan' dollars, I'm to marry yer; an' yer an' me'll keep shop—(I knows sich a nice place)—I'a a barber,' he sez; 'an' yer kin dress de ladies' hair, yer know; an' won't we live like to two turkey doves?' sez he.

"'Well,' I sez to 'im, 'seem a to me, darkie, yer've got it all picked an' roasted, oren't yer? An' when is all dis to be?' I sez; for I tell yer I was fairly struck up in a heap to hear it all sot out in order so.

"'As soon as ebber de marries Miss Ad'line,' sez Phil.

"'An' when will dat be, I'd like to know?' sez I. 'Can yer tell me?'

"'Putty soon, I hope,' sez Phil; 'for I'a most tired waiting.'

"'Waiting for what?' sez I. 'What is't to yer?'

"'I reckon it's a good deal to me,' he sez; 'for I won't get my money nor my free, if he don't marry her.'

"'Well, I tort dat war mighty curus; but seeing he war silly wid de drink, I didn't say no. I jes humoured him, and took him easy like.

"'"Is dat so?" sez I. 'An' what's de money an' de free for?' I sez, kinder quiet.

"'"Dat's a great secret," sez he. 'I don't tell dat to ebbery body; but yer sich a peart, smart gal, I wouldn't min' tellin' you; coz, yer know, we's going to sail in de same boat; an' yer won't blow on me, will yer? An', yer see, de sooner dey is married de sooner we gets the money, an' de shop, an' gets married ourselbes; and yer can help along, yer see; an' yer will, won't yer?'

"'Less yer de great secret fust,' I sez. 'I's undoubtful if it's so much, arter all. What's yer to hev de money an' de free for?' I sez. 'Tell us dat.'

"'Well, dat's jes it,' he sez. 'Yer see, dat's masser's great secret; an' I'm to hev 'um for keepin' on it; but I'll tell you, Linda. But if yer let it out—if yer tell on me, I s'pect masser will skin me alive? Yer see—keep dark now—masser's got a wife already! he! he! he! ain't dat rich, now?'

"'Got one wife! Den what do he come arter our Miss Ad'line for?' sez I.

"'Laws sakes alive, chile! if yer isn't jes as innercent as lamb's wool!' sez Phil. 'Why, don' yer see, Masser Rollestone he's done broke, cleaned out; spent all he own money, an' more too; an' he jes wants Miss Ad'line to fill his empty pockets for 'im. Now, don' yer see, hey?'

"'Yes; but, I sez, 'if he hab got one wife a'ready, what sort ob a marriage is dat going to be for my yong missus?'

"'Oh, well,' he sez, laffin, 'as good as dey most ob dem gibes dare darkies.'

"When Phil sed dat I war 'mazed like. I felt kinder hot, and kinder cold, too, all at onst, an' jes as ef somebody hed poured a whole lump of ice right down my back! Oh, I can tell yer noffin' how I did felt; but I seemed to grow cunning all in a minute; an' I tort den, an' it 'pears like it now, dat it was de good Lord's doings to save my poor yong lady; for I war jes a silly, highter-tighter gal till den; an' I allers felt de Lord he minded me wat to do, for I war jes as wise like as de snake is; an' I nebber let on to Phil how s'prised I war, nor how bad I felt; but I jes answered him back:

"'"Oh, sho; yer go way, nigger! Dat's a mighty loikly story! Got anoder wife, hab he? Oh, go long wid yer imperance; yer won't ootch dis chile to swaller dat wid her eyes open!'

"'"Yer may, Miss Linda,' sez Phil; 'for it's de bery truff.'

"'Oh yes,' I sex, laffin' like; 's'pose so—in course it is; and yer hev seen her yersel,' wid yer own eyes, I s'pect, hey?'

"'"Yes, a her,' sez Phil; 'I seen her many a time; an', more'n dat, I war at the wedding,' an' seen her married—dare now!'

"'"Oh, sakes alive! he Lord nabe us, darkie!" I cries out. 'An' ar'n't we smart? Went to de gran' weddin', did yer? Folks is mighty cibil in de Norf; I s'pect dey allers ax coloured gen'lemento dare weddin's; s'pose yer war de groom's best man yersel,' warn't yer? Sho! you at de weddin'! An' why did'n yer marry her yoursel' I wonder, if dey sot so much by yer?'

"'Well,' sez he, 'I did go to de wedding, Miss Linda; so yer can hev yer larff out; for dey war married in de church, an' all de congergation see it, too; so dat's it.'

"'An' who married 'um?' sez I; for I wanted to get the whole story out ob im.

"'Why, de ole Parson. Bradford he's de bride's father, he married 'em.'

"When he sed dat, I felt to believe 'im, coz I knowed if her farder married dem in de church, 'fore all de folks an' ebbery body, it mus' be true. An' so, dough I felt like deaff itsel', I jes' went on, coz he war so soft like, I knowed he'd tell me any thing den I might ax 'im. So I says, 'An' what war her name?'

"'Miss Mary Eliza Bradford,' sez Phil. 'An' she war oncommon putty—as white as milk, wid great blue eyes, an' yeller hair, jes like gold—putty again as yer Miss Ad'line; an' lors! Masser lobes her twice as well, an' de lille gal too.'

"'Gracious, Phil!' says I. 'Got a young one, too! Laws sakes! why, dey is sot up in bizniness, sure enuff; an' how in de world it all happen? Where did yer masser pick her up?'

"'Oh, yer see,' he sez, 'masser he went Norf to be eddicated at de college. An' dare he cut up some ob his shines, an' he war sent into de country, to Parson Bradford's; an' dare he done fell in lobe wid his darter, Miss Mary Eliza. An' de old parson he tort he war a rich yong Soufferner, an' dat his darter done make a great marriage. Ha! ha! I s'pect he'll fin' out his mistake 'bout de money putty quick, if my masser he don't marry Miss Ad'line.'

"'An' where is dey now—de wife an' chile?' I sez.

"'Oh! up in de country, living on de ole folks. An' dat makes me tink,' he sez, 'masser he gib me a letter to post to dem, dis ebening, an' I done forgot it. Well, I khan't tote down de one wid it now, I tell yer! I'll keep it in my pocket till ter-morrer, an' masser'll be no wiser. See here!' an' he took out de letter an' held it up before me. 'Yer can't read an' write, kin yer, Miss Linda?'

"'Not so berry well,' says I; for, laws sa kes, I couldn't tell a letter.

"'I kin, says he. 'De ole parson teached me when I war up dare. See here: "To de Reverend Silvester Joseph Bradford, Lincoln, Massachusetts." Dare,' says he, 'now does yer believe me?'

"'Why! how nice!' I sez. 'I couldn't do dat, Phil; do dear, yer read 'em agin, yer do it so bu'ful!'

"So den he read it agin, an' den I knowed I remember dat name. Yer see, white folks, what kin write, dey trusts to dare memmerramdums, an' dey don' trust to dare memory; but pore folks what can't write no memmerramdums, dey hes to 'member; an' my memory war jes as strong as a bull, an' I knowed I'd 'member dat name an' dat place, any way.

"'Well,' I sez, 'yer'd better put dat letter safe in year pocket now.'

"An' den, as I hab got all I want to know out ob 'um, I jes set an' talked conversation wid 'im 'bout oder tings; an' so he gets sober. An' by de time he masser an' my Miss Ad'line kim home, I s'pect he hab done forget he hab tole me noffin'. But I tell yer, dis chile didn't forget a word on't. Well; pretty soon Masser Rollestone rung for 'im, an' Phil went round wid de horses, an' I hab time to tink a bit. An' I tort Miss Ad'line she'll call me putty quick. An' what to do 'bout telling' her or not, I didn't know, no more nor a baby. But dem two, dey war long tellin' 'good-by,' dat night, an' I hab time to tink, an' tink. I tort she orter know it, if it war true; an' den I tort mebbe it isn't de truff—how kin I tell? An' at last dey went off. I heer de horses' feet 't trot, trot' down de abenu. An' den when my young lady's bell rung, I sez to myself, 'Laws! well, I'll jes wait, and 'flect on it a little fust; dare aint no hurry; dey is not 'gaged to each oder yet—dare can't be no hurry. "Rome war not built in de day-time," an' "one sweller don't make a summer-house," dey say. I guess I'll jes wait, an' 'flect on it a little.'

"Well, when I goes in to ondress Miss Ad'line, she war oncommon silent; an' I axed her had not she 'joyed herse'f at de party; coz she did'nt joke me 'bout Phil, as she offen did, nor say hardly nuffin to me, dough she seemed real pleasant too. An', she looks at me an' laffs, an' says, Yes, chile, a very pleasant ebening, indeed!'

"So I didn't say no more. An' I jes as I war going into de dressing room, where I slep', she sez, 'Linda, yer may put out de light, an' open de winder-curtins, an' let in de moonlight.' An' so I done it. An' den she sez, 'Kim a-heah, Linda! I's got suffing to tell yer.' And I goed and knelt down by her bedside.

"I tell'd yer she were putty; an' oh! she did look real putty dat night in de moonlight, all in white, wid her great bu'ful eyes sparklin' like di'mons, an' her cheeks a-glowing like two red roses. She hed a branch ob white jesmin' in her hand, which de Kurnul gib her, an' she kinder kivered her face wid it as she spoke, as she didn't want even me to look at her while she talked.

"'Linda,' she sez, kinder soft like, 'I am very happy to-night; I am a-going to marry Kurnul Rollestone,' she sez, 'he hab offer to me to-day, an' papa sez he will gib his consent; an' oh, Linda, I lobe him so much!'

"'Oh, Miss Ad'line!' I sez; for I didn't know whot in de worl' to say; 'an' will yer leave yer pa an' go away to lib wid him?'

"'Oh, Linda!' she sez, kinder tender like, an' den I see de great tears kim in her putty eyes, 'I s'pect I shall; my moder lef' her farder to kim an' live wid mine, yer know; an', Linda,' she sez, brightenin' up arter a bit, 'I'll hev yer still. Kurnul Rollestone an' me habn't forgot you an' yer sweetheart, nudder. He sez when he is married he'll gib Phil his free, an' suffin to set him up in bizziness; an', in course, I'll do as much for yer,' she sez, giving my chin a little soft pinch wid her putty white fingers. 'So, you see girl, yer fortin's made; an' now run off to bed, and dream of it, if you can.' An' I tanked her an' went out. But, laws sakes alive! I couldn't dream, for I couldn't sleep, not a wink ob one eye. But jes kep' tinkin' an' tinkin' what hed I orter to do, an' I couldn't tell nohow. I see dare wa'n't no time to lose now, an' I kep' tinkin' to myse'f, 'A word before is worf two behind,' and 'A breaf may put out de candle dat would burn de house down'—an' oh! what muss I do? 'Peared I couldn't bear to tell her, an' spile all her putty happiness; an' I didn't darst to tell old masser for de life ob me. An' den dare war Phil, an' my freedom an' de shop; an' dough I war bery well off wid Miss Ad'line, one do lobe to own der own arms an' legs—dat's so. Well, I couldn't make out no way, an' at las' I thinks, 'Well, I'll tell Miss Ad'line, it's jes her bizziness, an' maybe she'll know what's best to do.' An' by dat time 'twar morning, and jes den she call me, an' I went in.

"'I can't sleep to-night, Linda,' sez she to me. 'Whatebber is de matter ob me I don' no, I s'pects I's nervous; so I wan't yer to kim an' talk wid me,'

"'Oh, de pore ting! she didn't know what she wer axing for! So I went to her bedside, an' I sez to her, 'Oh, Miss Ad'line, honey! whist, now, I's got suffin terrible to tell yer on! Oh, my pore young lady—speak low—hush!'

"Den she sot right up in bed, deafly pale, her lips as white as her hands, and she sez, in a low whisper, 'Is it a rising, Linda?' coz, yer know, de white folks dey allers tort ob dat de bery fustest ting.

"'Oh no!' I sez, 'it ar'n't dat; but it's suffing jes as bad, an' I've found it out, an' I's kim to tell yer. But yer mus' promise, as sure as ebber yer war borned, not to tell on me, nor de one who telled me, or mebbe it will cost us both our mortal lives.'

"'I promise,' she sez; but she trembled so she could har'ly speak.

"'Will yer swear it?' sez.

"She reached out her hand, an' took up a book from de outside ob de bed, me 'spect Kurnul Rollestone war in de drawin'-room. I didn't tell Miss Ad'line—I tort it best not—but I called out masser an' telled him, an' he went down.

"Well, he jes called him out on ter de front verander, an' gib him the ole parson's letter, an' watched him while he read it.

"'Yer need not deny it,' he sez; 'for I kin read de lie in yer d—d white face. If yer war worff a gen'leman's powder an' shot, I'd shoot yer where yer stan'; but yer beneath me. For my darter's sake, I'll gib yer jes one hour's start to make yer escape. At de end ob dat time I'll go to de banks an' de hotels an' all de public places, an' 'claim yer as a liar an' a cheat, a pauper an' a swindler; an' ef ebber yer is foun' round here agin, by the Lord dat made me I'll set de blood-hounds arter yer!' an' wid dat masser knocked 'im down, an' kicked him down de front steps.

"Sam telled me dis arterward. Sam was tickled to deaff when he seen it, for dough he didn't know what Kurnul Rollestone hab done, yet he hab allars hated de Kurnul an' Phil, Sam hab, coz—Desdemony and me, we praised 'um; an' yer know, 'when de tree is fallen, ebbery hatchet wants to hab a chop at it.' Well, yer may b'lieve me, we nebber see no more ob dem two lobyers!"

"Poor Miss Adeline! How did she bear it?" I asked.

"Putty well, afore folks. She hab too much spunk to gib way when folks war round; an' she laffed an' danced an' sung, jes as she use to; but, laws, I could see de difference in her. She couldn't keep it up 'fore me; an' she didn't care to. She knowed dat I knowed only too well!"

"But was she never courted again, Linda?"

"Sakes alive, chile! She hab heaps an' heaps of lobyers; but what war dey to her? She didn't care for none ob 'em! Oh no, no, chile! 'De mill can't grind wid de water dat's past by.' Ah, dat's so—dat's so!

"She war kinder del'cate all dat summer, and when it kim autumn she took'd a bad cold, an' den she war more del'cater still, an' all dat winter she kinder faded like, an' in de spring she died. I tink she knowed she war going to die, an' I tink she warn't sorry; for it 'peared as ef de sunshin' ob her heart hab gone out.

"De day she died—it war bery hot, an' she war bery weak, an' I stook by de bedside fannin ob her, an' masser he sot by her piller; an' all at once she looks up, an' sez, 'Papa, dearest, what did yer ebber do for this good, true, brave gal what saved me from such a dreadful fate? Didn't yer say yer'd gib her her freedom, an' hab she ebber hab it?'

"'No, my darling!' sez masser, 'not yet; but I mean she shall.'

"'Oh papa!' she sez (suffin' as she used to speak in de merry ole times), "I mean" is a good dog, but, "I've done" is a better one.'

"'I know it, dearest,' sez my masser; an' I hev de papers all ready in de house for her.'

"'Den,' she sez, 'papa, dear papa! will you bring dem, an' let me hev the pleasure ob gibin' dem to her mysel'? It may be dis is the bery lastest ting yer pore little Addy will ebber ax ob yer.'

"Pore ole masser! he nebber sed a word (I doubt he couldn't), but he got right up an' went out.

"In a little while he kim back wid de papers in his hand. I tort Miss Ad'line war asleep den, for her eyes war shut, an' I made a sign to masser not to 'sturb her; but she heered 'im, and opened her eyes, an' held out her hand for de papers, and masser gibed 'um to her.

"'Tank yer, she sez; 'are yer sure dey is all right? did a lawyer draw dem up? are yer sure dey is all correct, papa?'

"'Dey is all right, my dear chille!' sez masser; 'yer may 'pend on dat.'

"Den she turns to me: 'Linda! dear Linda! my good, true gal!' she sez, 'I gib yer yer freedom—here is yer papers; take dem from me, in memory ob yer truff an' devotion to me.'

"'Oh, Miss Ad'line!' I sez, crying as if my heart would break—'oh, my dear, dear yeng missus!'

"'No,' she say, softly, 'not your missus now, nebber yer missus any more; yer is free—free as I am, Linda! An' when we meet again in yonder heaben,'—an' she lifted her little trembling white hand as she spoke, 'it will not be as missus an slave, but as friends, dear Linda! friends!' an' dem war de last, libing words she ebber spoke."

One dollar counterfeit bills are in circulation in Winnipeg, Man.

THE LADIES' CORNER

PRESERVING FLOWERS.

In the first place, procure about half a bushel of fine, clean sand; sift it through a coarse sieve, so that no pebbles or dirt will be mixed with it. Then have a strong, tight wooden box with a cover. I procured a candle-box at the village store, and lined it with paper. The box and sand must be perfectly dry. Cover the bottom of the box with sand an inch thick. Cut the flowers when dry; leave the stems rather longer than if you were going to use them immediately; brush them carefully, so that no insect shall be left hidden in the petals. Take red sealing-wax, melt it in a tin cup, and dip the ends of the stems in the wax while it is hot. Have ready a bit of fine cotton cloth and wrap tightly over the wax; then lay the flower, with green leaves attached, carefully in the box, on the sand. (My first layer was peonies, purple lilacs and snowballs; I laid them as close as